

Tilburg University

Re-Interpreting Historical Dividedness

Schelkens, K.

Published in:
The Normativity of History

Publication date:
2016

Document Version
Version created as part of publication process; publisher's layout; not normally made publicly available

[Link to publication in Tilburg University Research Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Schelkens, K. (2016). Re-Interpreting Historical Dividedness: The Hierarchy of Councils as a Means for Christian Unity. In L. Boeve, M. Lamberigts, & T. Merrigan (Eds.), *The Normativity of History: Theological Truth and Tradition in the Tension between Church History and Systematic Theology* (Vol. 282, pp. 67-99). [5] (BETL). Peeters Publishers.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

RE-INTERPRETING HISTORICAL DIVIDEDNESS

THE HIERARCHY OF COUNCILS AS A MEANS FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY¹

I. INTRODUCTION

In his landmark study of the evolving relationships between Pope Paul VI and the Orthodox Churches, the Benedictine friar Patrice Mahieu writes that Paul VI “n’hésite pas, riche de sa formation d’histoire et de juriste, à relire l’histoire des cultes, l’histoire de l’Église”². This fact constitutes the point of departure for this contribution which focuses on the background of the aforementioned relationships. In the history of ecumenism, the Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople³ and Cardinal Johannes Willebrands are figures of primordial importance. Both men are well appreciated for their role in promoting the unity among Christian Churches, a role that is increasingly becoming an object of study. This article seeks to make a modest contribution to this study. In a broad sense, the bilateral contacts between the Vatican and the Phanar constitute the context for this study. We will give some insight into this evolving relationship by focusing on the two aforementioned protagonists:

1. The present study is an updated version of a French article, that appeared as K. SCHELKENS, *Envisager la concélébration entre catholiques et orthodoxes? Johannes Willebrands et Athénagoras de Constantinople*, in *Istina* 57 (2012) 127-157. In order to complete this study, I could rely strongly on the suggestions and comments of a number of specialists in the field, all of whom I would like to thank here: Msgr. Johan Bonny, Angelo Maffei, Mauro Velati, dom Michel Van Parys, can. Leo Declerck and Mrs. Maria ter Steeg. I wholeheartedly thank Dr. John Borelli, as well as Frs Ron Roberson CSP and Thom Stransky CSP for guiding me towards the John Long papers at Georgetown University. I also would like to thank Leon Hooper, who gave me full access to the aforementioned papers in the Woodstock Library at Georgetown.

2. See P. MAHIEU, *Paul VI et les orthodoxes* (Orthodoxie), Paris, Cerf, 2012, p. 242. Further on in these pages, the author indicates how re-reading church history involves revisiting the history and the normativity of the councils, a pivotal issue for the general theme of this book.

3. The best and most complete study on Athenagoras currently available remains the one by V. MARTANO, *Athenagoras il patriarca (1886-1972): Un cristiano fra crisi della coabitazione e utopia ecumenica* (Testi e ricerche di scienze religiose. NS, 17), Bologna, Il Mulino, 1996. Also see O. CLÉMENT, *Athenagoras 1*, in N. LOSSKY *et al.* (eds.), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, Geneva, WCC-Publications, 2002, 74-76. Less academic in nature is the booklet by V. GHEORGHIU, *La vie du patriarche Athénagoras*, Paris, Plon, 1969.

Cardinal Willebrands and Patriarch Athenagoras. It is important to note that we will do so from a specific angle, and bearing in mind some limitations. First, the main accent will be on the role of Cardinal Willebrands, and more specifically, his evolving relationship with the Patriarchate of Constantinople. We take Willebrands' case as a *pars pro toto* for the development of Roman Catholic ecumenical commitment to improving relations with the Orthodox world. We will achieve our goal by briefly presenting three important historical moments between the Old and the New Rome, and more strictly: between Willebrands and Athenagoras. These three moments are located in time in a particular way, and of interest for actual Vatican II research⁴: the first one takes place before the opening of the Second Vatican Council, in the preconciliar era; the second during Vatican II, and the third is a postconciliar moment of increased ecumenical *rapprochement* between the two Churches. In fact, by somewhat anticipating the issue at stake during the "third moment", we could have given this text the title: *From Hesitation to Concelebration*. Thus, spanning the period from 1959 until the death of the Patriarch in 1972⁵, we will be conflating the preconciliar, the conciliar and the postconciliar periods in order to trace some evolution. This study will identify Willebrands' role in each respective moment. In sum, these moments of intensified contact between the Old and the New Rome consist of a) the period of preconciliar preparations; b) the actual council period with its

4. The research on Vatican II is increasingly developing towards a stronger emphasis on the Council's embeddedness within the larger context of the twentieth century, and of conciliar history as such. This also implies striving for a more balanced view of Vatican II's reception and the hermeneutical problematic. In this regard, our recent volume hopes to provide the domain with a landmark study. See G. ROUTHIER – P.J. ROY – K. SCHELKENS (eds.), *La théologie catholique entre intransigeance et renouveau: La réception des mouvements préconciliaires à Vatican II* (Bibliothèque de la Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, 95), Turnhout, Brepols, 2011.

5. It should be pointed out that the general development of the relationships between the Vatican and the Phanar are documented in an excellent way in the edition of the so-called *Tomos Agapis: Vatican – Phanar (1958-1970)*, Rome – Istanbul, 1970 [henceforth: TA]. Much of the mutual correspondence and allocutions (including letters and speeches from the pope and the patriarch, from Cardinals Bea and Willebrands, and from several of the Constantinople Metropolitans), together constituting the "Dialogue of Charity" have been made available to the public in this unique volume. We may also refer to the book of A. PANOTIS, *Les pacificateurs: Jean XXIII, Athénagoras, Paul VI, Dimitrios, Dragan*, Fondation Européenne, 1974. An important collection of edited documents that serves as general background to this story is that by E.J. STORMON (ed.), *Towards the Healing of Schism: The Sees of Rome and Constantinople. Public Statements and Correspondence between the Holy See and the Ecumenical Patriarchate 1958-1984* (Ecumenical Documents, 3), New York, Paulist, 1987. An interesting account of the itinerary of Catholic-Orthodox contacts until the 1970s is found in D. SALACHAS, *Il dialogo teologico ufficiale tra la chiesa cattolica romana e la chiesa ortodossa*, in *Quaderni di odigos* 10 (1994) 12-47.

“culmen” in the two well known and major events: the mutual embracement of Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras in the Holy Land in early 1964, the uplifting of the anathema's of the year 1054, pronounced on December 7, 1965; c) a third moment is situated in the postconciliar period: in the late 1960s and early 1970s when the efforts at reconciliation between the Old and the New Rome were taken to the brink of full communion through that attempt at concelebration by Paul VI and the Patriarch, which was prepared in the utmost secrecy⁶. These three moments can be used to sketch the evolution between the two Churches. In addition, they can also be appealed to for the methodological purposes of integrating the conciliar events into the broader historical framework.

In presenting this story we rely on many of the recent and excellent publications devoted to the role of Willebrands as a Roman Catholic pioneer in *ecumenicis*, including his diary editions⁷, recent studies published by Mauro Velati⁸ and an upcoming collection of the Centenary Conference Acts⁹, all of which illustrate his unique standpoint. This presentation is largely based upon the reports prepared by Willebrands, held in the *Cardinal Willebrands Archives*¹⁰, but combined with sources of

6. Very little attention has been devoted to the silent round of study and consultation, outside of the intentions officially expressed by the pope and the patriarch made public in the TA and Stormon's collection. In the discussion round of the 1998 Brescia conference on Paul VI and ecumenism, brief reference is given to it by Mauro Velati in conversation with Duprey. See the section *Discussione*, in ISTITUTO PAOLO VI, *Paolo VI e l'ecumenismo: Colloquio internazionale di studio, 25-27 settembre 1998* (Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto Paolo VI, 23), Brescia, Istituto Paolo VI, 2001, 317-318. On p. 318, Duprey stated: “Una commissione molto, molto segreta – è la prima volta che ne parlo –, composta da quattro persone, due cattolici e due ortodossi, ebbe l'incarico dal Santo Padre di esaminare la possibilità di una concelebrazione eucaristica del patriarca e del papa”.

7. The following volumes provide much of the needed background to comprehend Willebrands' role in the period covered by this study: T. SALEMINK (ed.), *You Will Be Called Repairer of the Breach: The Diary of J.G.M. Willebrands 1958-1961* (Instrumenta Theologica, 32), Leuven, Peeters, 2009; L. DECLERCK (ed.), *Les agendas conciliaires de Mgr. J. Willebrands, secrétaire du Secrétariat pour l'Unité des chrétiens* (Instrumenta Theologica, 31), Leuven, Peeters, 2009.

8. M. VELATI, *Una difficile transizione: Il cattolicesimo tra unionismo ed ecumenismo (1952-1964)* (Testi e ricerche di scienze religiose. NS, 16), Bologna, Il Mulino, 1996; ID., *Dialogo e rinnovamento: Verbal e testi del Segretariato per l'Unità dei cristiani nella preparazione del Concilio Vaticano II (1960-1962)* (Fonti e strumenti di ricerca, 5), Bologna, Il Mulino, 2011; ID., *Separati ma fratelli: Gli osservatori non cattolici al Vaticano II (1962-1965)* (Testi e ricerche di scienze religiose. NS, 16), Bologna, Il Mulino, 2014.

9. A. DENAUX – P. DE MEY (eds.), *The Ecumenical Legacy of Johannes Cardinal Willebrands* (BETL, 253), Leuven, Peeters, 2012.

10. L. DECLERCK, *Inventaire des archives personnelles du Cardinal J. Willebrands, secrétaire (1960-1969) et président du Secrétariat pour l'Unité des chrétiens, archevêque d'Utrecht (1975-1983)* (Instrumenta Theologica, 35), Leuven, Peeters, 2013.

other archives, such as the *Archivio Segreto Vaticano*, holding both the SCUF papers and the so-called *Carte Bea*. Important original documentation was also found in the papers of Fr. John Long at Georgetown University, as well as some materials contained in the Archives of the Chevetogne monastery. At the time that this paper was written, the late Fr. Lanne, was already severely ill, and I was unable to rely on his knowledge of the matter. Luckily, this lacuna has been compensated for by a recent study offering additional materials, published by the aforementioned dom Patrice Mahieu, in the periodical *Istina*¹¹. Furthermore, the papers of Msgr. Emiel-Jozef De Smedt and Gustave Thils were also of service. Moreover, I was able to make use of several recently disclosed sources, such as the council diaries of Metropolitan Hermaniuk, a member of the Secretariat¹², and those of Eugene R. Fairweather. In using all of these materials, the perspective is consistently the position of Willebrands, which may clarify the particular importance attached to his role in this contribution. At the same time, we will not fail to keep track of the activities and positions of Pope Paul VI¹³, and of Willebrands' close collaborators and friends, namely, Pierre Duprey and Christophe-Jean Dumont.

II. THE FIRST MOMENT: THE PRECONCILIAR PERIOD

1. *The "Rhodes Incident" and the Foundation of the Secretariat for Christian Unity*

Speaking of Father Dumont, one is immediately introduced into the particular preconciliar background to the present story. In the decade preceding Vatican II, Willebrands and Dumont became close friends. In fact, it is largely through the help and support of this French dominican and his confrere Yves Congar, that Willebrands was able to play the role he played thanks to a pre-existing network of Roman Catholic ecumenists¹⁴. Since 1951, the Dutch Seminary professor Willebrands was

11. P. MAHIEU, *La concélébration projetée entre Paul VI et Athénagoras I: Enseignements théologiques et nature des obstacles*, in *Istina* 58 (2013) 41-68.

12. K. SCHELKENS – J.Z. SKIRA, *The Second Vatican Council Diaries of Metropolitan Maxim Hermaniuk C.S.S.R. (1960-1965)* (Eastern Christian Studies, 15), Leuven, Peeters, 2012.

13. In this regard, see the collection of studies in *Paolo VI e l'ecumenismo* (n. 6).

14. Aside from a few studies, this issue remains largely uunderappreciated. Some attention was given to it in VELATI, *Una difficile transizione* (n. 8), pp. 17-47; L. VISCHER, *The Ecumenical Movement and the Roman Catholic Church*, in H.C. FEY, *A History of*

active as secretary (there was no president) to the so-called “Catholic Conference for Ecumenical Questions”. From the start, this project, which initially sprung forth from the Dutch Saint Willibrord Association and also headed by Willebrands since 1948, attempted to unify the efforts of preconciliar catholic ecumenists on a European level. It gained much of its support from the Dominican Institute *Istina* in Paris, and in particular from Congar and Dumont, the founder of *Istina*¹⁵. Not only did they support the Catholic Conference, they also provided Willebrands – who had little to no expertise in the field of the orthodox Churches – with the necessary support and scholarly basis to engage in contacts with representatives from the Eastern Churches. In February 1959, immediately upon the announcement of the council, Willebrands and Dumont worked intensely together to prepare a Note to be signed by the directorial board of the Catholic Conference, and to be offered to the antepreparatory Commission¹⁶. Then, in the summer of 1959, both men were invited to attend the Central Committee meeting of the World Council of Churches in Rhodes, by the WCC secretary general Willem Adolf Visser’t Hooft. The latter, a fellow Dutchman, was then trying to obtain the integration of the orthodox into the World Council of Churches, which would be ratified at the New Delhi Assembly in 1961¹⁷. The “Rhodes Incident”¹⁸ is well known: at a separate meeting aside of the Central Committee a group of Orthodox bishops met with the two aforementioned catholic

the Ecumenical Movement 1948-1968, Geneva, World Council of Churches, 2004, 314-322; P. DE MEY, *Précurseur du Secrétariat pour l'Unité: Le travail œcuménique de la Conférence Catholique pour les Questions Œcuméniques (1952-1963)*, in ROUTHIER – SCHELKENS – ROY (eds.), *La théologie catholique* (n. 4), 287-303; J. JACOBS, *Naar één œcuménische beweging: De Katholieke Conferentie voor Œcuménische Vragen, een leer-school en gids, 1951-1965*, Tilburg, 1991.

15. É. FOUILLOUX, *Une longue marche vers l'œcuménisme: Istina (1923-1967)*, in *Istina* 55 (2010) 271-287.

16. The note is found in the Archives of the Monastery of Chevetogne [AMC]: F. Catholic Conference for Ecumenical Questions: *Note du Comité Directeur de la “Conférence Catholique pour les Questions Œcuméniques” sur la restauration de l'Unité chrétienne à l'occasion du prochain Concile*. The importance of this document was discussed by É. FOUILLOUX, in his landmark study, *Mouvements théologico-spirituels et concile (1959-1962)*, in M. LAMBERIGTS – C. SOETENS (eds.), *À la veille du Concile Vatican II: Vota et réactions en Europe et dans le catholicisme oriental* (Instrumenta Theologica, 9), Leuven, Peeters, 1992, 185-199, pp. 197-198; and recently in a more elaborate way in DE MEY, *Précurseur du Secrétariat* (n. 14), pp. 267-303.

17. WCC, *The New Delhi Report: The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches 1961*, London, SCM, 1962, p. 66.

18. See K. SCHELKENS, *L’“affaire de Rhodes” au jour le jour: La correspondance inédite entre J.M.G. Willebrands et Ch.-J. Dumont*, in *Istina* 54 (2009) 253-277. Willebrands’ own account was published in *La rencontre de Rhodes*, in *Vers l'Unité Chrétienne* 13 (1960) 1-4.

“journalists”, causing furious reactions from the side of the World Council of Churches and considerable tension with the orthodox representatives. Although we cannot enter into detail, the incident should not go unmentioned for two reasons: first, it clearly illustrates how Dumont and Willebrands joined efforts in developing contacts with both the WCC and the Orthodox world even before Willebrands played an official role¹⁹. Second, this incident made it painfully clear that the Roman Catholic Church experienced a lack of an “official address” for ecumenical contacts, a situation that was eventually resolved with the establishment of the Secretariat for Christian Unity in June 1960 and partially as a result of the incident²⁰. It is not surprising that Willebrands became the ‘right hand’ of the cardinal president of this new body, cardinal Augustin Bea²¹. In this secretariat, much of the expertise available on the local and informal levels was now raised to the official level of a future Vatican dicastery. In the words of Velati, “l’influsso di Willebrands è sicuro anche nella scelta dei membri del segretariato che non a caso provengono per buona parte dalla cerchia della Conferenza cattolica. L’ex comitato direttivo della conferenza viene assorbito in blocco tra le fila del segretariato”. Thus, one can be certain of the central role of the Dutch prelate in the upcoming ecumenical activities²² of the newly founded Secretariat as the organ within the Vatican which serves as the official vehicle for ongoing contacts with the ecumenical patriarchate.

19. In fact, Willebrands had already met some Orthodox as early as 1952, when the “Journées œcuméniques de Chevetogne” were devoted to the Eastern schism. See É. FOUILLOUX, *Les catholiques et l’unité chrétienne du 19^e au 20^e siècle: Itinéraires européens d’expression française*, Paris, Le Centurion, 1982, p. 772.

20. For the foundation of the Secretariat, see M. VELATI, *Un indirizzo a Roma: La nascita del Segretariato per l’Unità dei cristiani (1959-1960)*, in G. ALBERIGO (ed.), *Il Vaticano fra attese e celebrazione* (Testi e ricerche di scienze religiose. NS, 13), Bologna, Il Mulino, 1995, 75-118, pp. 83-84. Willebrands himself devoted more attention to the importance of the Secretariat’s establishment in his article: J. WILLEBRANDS, *Il movimento ecumenico: Sviluppo e speranze*, in *Humanitas* 15 (1960) 263-277.

21. See SALEMINK (ed.), *You Will Be Called* (n. 7), pp. 13-15. Also see Willebrands’ notes on the secret meeting at Gazzada – held at the same time of the gathering of the Catholic Conference on September 22, 1960, with Visser’t Hooft and Cardinal Bea, in which the SCUF-leadership discussed much of the future agenda for Vatican II with the WCC-secretary general. Among the topics was the question of the observers. See pp. 209-210: “about the possibility of ‘observers’. The WCC can’t speak for or in the name of the Churches, but can give us advice about the way in which we address the Churches, etc. A statute will need to be made for the ‘observers’: what is their place, how do these differ, for example, from journalists”.

22. In order to comprehend Willebrands’ interpretation of catholic ecumenism before Vatican II, and its role and function, see the article of J. WILLEBRANDS, *Catholic Ecumenism*, in ID. et al., *Problems Before Unity*, Baltimore, MD, Helicon, 1962, 1-13.

2. February 1962: Willebrands' First Journey to Constantinople

In early 1962 the first of our three moments of intensified relationships between Rome and Constantinople took place. It was not only in Rome that the activities were constantly developing for ecumenical relationships on the eve of the council were also in full expansion within the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In November 1961, Athenagoras obtained ratification of the Eastern Orthodox Churches' membership in the World Council of Churches at the New Delhi Assembly²³, in addition the ecumenical patriarchate was in constant movement on the level of bilateral contacts. For instance, in March 1962, Andreas Rinkel, the Old Catholic Bishop of Utrecht visited the ecumenical patriarch. Just two months later the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Ramsey, was present at the Phanar. Clearly, the attitude of the ecumenical patriarch displayed a willingness to engage in contact with other Churches which provided the necessary foundation for Orthodox-Roman Catholic contacts after the 1959 setback.

In Rome, Willebrands and his peers closely followed the evolutions, until February 1962 when the SCUF-secretary traveled to Istanbul himself²⁴. While in Istanbul he met several representatives of the ecumenical patriarchate and thanks to the preparations that had been initiated more than a year before, important conversations developed. In a small committee within the Secretariat, including Catholic Conference board members Joseph Höfer, Christophe Dumont and Charles Boyer, Willebrands probed the possibility of inviting non-catholic observers at Vatican II. He did so by making unequivocal references to the Rhodes incident, and to his contacts with the World Council of Churches. The openness for observers was revealed in a speech held by cardinal Tardini in late October 1959²⁵. Taking advantage of the opening created by the Vatican State Secretary, the SCUF seized the occasion to reflect on Willebrands' suggestion. On December 15, 1960, the issue was brought to the general discussion, and would be raised again two months later at the SCUF's general meeting in Ariccia. Reporting on the general discussion in the SCUF on February 9, 1961, Willebrands' opinion was:

Une présence d'observateurs est importante pour le mouvement œcuménique et la fraternisation des Églises et des chrétiens. Les observateurs aujourd'hui ne sont pas des adversaires mais des hommes qui ont une expérience

23. MARTANO, *Athenagoras* (n. 3), pp. 442-443.

24. For instance, the Archivio Segreto Vaticano [ASV]: Conc. Vat. II, file 831.4, holds the reports of the conversations between the Patriarch and the Benedictine Fr. Regis Barwig, on January 24, 1961.

25. *Acta et Documenta* I/1, pp. 159-163.

œcuménique, nous pouvons avoir confiance et nous attendre à ce qu'ils comprennent chrétiennement les questions à traiter²⁶.

This attitude of trust, and the decision to ask the non-roman catholic communities to send observers provided the impetus for Willebrands to undertake his first journey to Constantinople. The trip was specifically intended to extend an open invitation to the ecumenical patriarchate to send observers to Vatican II. Apart from its particular goal, the meeting was of great significance for the future and common trajectory of both Churches. In fact, even while both were engaging in the ecumenical field, the formal relationships between the Phanar and Rome were extremely low profile and even scarce before February 1962. The nature of earlier contacts was reserved to that of the exchange of polite formalities and there was not any direct correspondence between the patriarchs of the sees of Rome and of Constantinople. For example, there is a letter of December 1961 from cardinal Bea to the ecumenical patriarch Athenagoras thanking him for a present. The letter was answered with a brief note of gratitude from the side of Maximos of Sardis²⁷. Informally however, contacts existed. Metropolitan Maximos was well acquainted with Dumont and Pierre Duprey. Moreover, Willebrands' visit was preceded by a visit to the patriarchate by Jesuit Fr. Alfons Raes and Mgr. Testa, of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches²⁸. The latter visit marked the parting of ways of the Oriental Congregation and the Secretariat for Unity for the plans offered by Msgr Willebrands to undertake a joint journey with members of staff from the Congregation and the Secretariat stalled in April 1961²⁹.

On Wednesday February 14 – during the Ramadan month of 1962 – Willebrands departed for Istanbul upon the invitation of the ecumenical patriarch. His first conversations on the day after his arrival were with Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Myra. From the start, these talks initiated

26. CLG: F. THILS: *Report from the Meeting at Ariccia on February 9, 1961*. Cf. VELATI, *Dialogo e rinnovamento* (n. 8), p. 301, where one finds the publication of Willebrands' report on the question of inviting non-catholic observers.

27. See TA 6 and 7.

28. On the preparations of this "missione informativa" by the Congregation, see ASV: Conc. Vat. II, 849.1. The dossier holds a six page *Relazione sulla missione informativa sui lavori preparatori del Concilio mandata al Patriarca di Costantinopoli*, written by the Belgian Jesuit Alfons Raes, and dates from July 5, 1961.

29. ASV: Conc. Vat. II, 849.1. The dossier contains Willebrands' *Pro-memoria circa una visita da farsi in collaborazione colla Pontificia Commissione per le Chiese Orientali al Patriarca Athenagoras I di Costantinopoli*, April 10, 1961. It also holds subsequent correspondence between Willebrands and State Secretary Cicognani, as well as a reaction by Athanasios Welykyj, from the Oriental Congregation.

a process of discernment for Willebrands, who was due to meet the synodal commission for pan-christian relationships, and was immediately warned of the tensions within the members of the Synod. While one wing appeared to be open for friendly relationships with Roman Catholicism, another fraction was vehemently against it. Immediately, Willebrands was immersed in longstanding historical sensitivities. Negative feelings were aroused by John XXIII's encyclical *Aeterna Dei Sapientia*, promulgated on November 11, 1961, since the encyclical on Leo the Great referred back to canon 28 of Chalcedon, claiming the Roman see as the principal ecclesiastical see.

In Istanbul, it was read as a denial of the role and place of Constantinople, and therefore as a return to the positions held by Roman Catholics before the Councils of Lyons and Florence. One of Willebrands' first moves was to explain the value of the encyclical, to express his regrets, thereby revealing something of his discrete and diplomatic qualities in ecumenical conversation, so praised by Visser't Hooft in his memoirs³⁰. Willebrands stressed the importance of an open psychological climate, and highlighted that official acts or speeches should not be allowed to paralyze the ongoing process of dialogue. One ought to present the Catholic Church's doctrines clearly and completely, but to avoid hurtful pronouncements, claimed Willebrands, referring to the principle he would later make his official episcopal device: "Veritatem faciens in caritate".

Naturally, the conversations touched upon the issue of the observers. The metropolitan explained that any invitation should be directed immediately to the patriarch, who would expedite the invitation to the autocephalous Churches. This, however, had procedural implications. Two options existed: either each of the autocephalous Churches could be left free in their choice to accept or reject the invitation, or the invitation could only be accepted if and when all respective Churches agreed. Also, against the background of the Rhodes incident it is interesting to note the fact that any eventual representation at Vatican II would not be seen as analogous to the already existing representation of Phanar at the WCC headquarters in Geneva.

During that same afternoon, the first of two informal conversations with Patriarch Athenagoras took place. It was a conversation that was entirely different in nature: the patriarch did not go into procedural issues at all. Athenagoras first expressed his personal admiration for John XXIII, and then directly addressed Willebrands, explaining that: "the Lord is no longer among the Churches, for they are not one. We should try to find

30. W.A. VISSER'T HOOFT, *Memoirs*, London, SCM, 1973, p. 323.

Him again, and the theologians should help in doing so". Willebrands reported him saying, "you are a theologian. I am part of the Church's governance, and if only the matter depended on those governing the Church, it would be much easier, but the theologians, they have to cooperate"³¹.

The journey proceeded with official talks with the members of the Commission for Pan-Christian Relationships, presided by Met. Maximos of Sardis. Before this commission the Vatican representative held a plea for spiritual and theological rapprochement and collaboration, and suggested setting aside old mutual accusations. Willebrands also visited the orthodox school of Halki, led by Met. Maximos Rapanellis, an alumnus of the Leuven theological faculty, to have another meeting with the Patriarch on February 19, 1962. Even if the goal of the journey, having observers sent to the Council, would not be reached, the second conversation between Athenagoras and Willebrands nevertheless remained of primordial importance for further developments. To clarify this, we can look at the activities deployed in Rome by the SCUF's second subcommission "*De structura hierarchica ecclesiae*"³². This subcommission actively prepared and discussed the notions of episcopal collegiality and papal primacy, as well as the extent to which the bishops are sovereign in their local churches³³. On his own initiative, Athenagoras took up the point of the role of the bishops and their relatedness to the bishop of Rome. The Patriarch stated that "Rome cannot be expected to give up on its dogma of papal infallibility", and explained that in the future fifty years the role of the bishop would have to come to the forefront. Willebrands recorded the patriarch's words as follows:

The bishop is the leader of his Church. Think of the bishops, your bishops, in Africa, Asia, America, [...] they will lead their local churches in their own way, but united with Rome. They should have their own forms, in rites, in clothing, etc. But on the essential level they are undivided. The pope should take the lead in this evolution. Not merely in your Church but for the whole of christianity³⁴.

31. CSVII: F. Willebrands 284: *Report of the Journey to Constantinople*, 14-21 February 1962. Also found in Italian translation in ASV: Conc. Vat. II, 321.2

32. CSVII: F. De Smedt 120: *Subcommissionis de structura hierarchica ecclesiae votorum conspectus*. On the subcommission's activities, see the files published in VELATI, *Dialogo e rinnovamento* (n. 8), pp. 337-350.

33. VELATI, *Dialogo e rinnovamento* (n. 8), pp. 338-341.

34. CSVII: F. Willebrands 284, *Report on the Journey to Istanbul*.

3. *Finding Common Ground*

For all of its imperfections, this first moment of intensified contact is important for several reasons. First, the level of dialogue has shifted from the informal to the formal level. No real contact between the two Churches' leadership was yet established, but the Roman Catholic Church and Constantinople were now on speaking terms, with mandates from their respective hierarchs – this constituted a groundbreaking event in itself. The psychological climate was one of openness for dialogue and of searching for points of convergence, even though the internal opposition in both Old and New Rome was far from absent³⁵. The mandate for conversation from both sides was supported on the highest level. In addition, there was a mutual willingness to move beyond historical dividing points, such as Chalcedon canon 28, the issue of the *filioque* and the dogma of Mary's assumption, all of which, according to Athenagoras, did not constitute an obstacle. At this stage, the interpretation of papal primacy was considered to be the main difficulty. However, it was an issue on which the viewpoints of the Secretariat and the Patriarch appeared to be very close, and which was bound to the problematic of episcopal collegiality.

At the same time, the practical aim of this first “prise de contact” was not realized: no observers from the side of the patriarchate would be sent to the council at this early stage. And, as is well known, the standing invitation was only accepted³⁶ during the final period of Vatican II.

35. See TA 23, on December 8, 1962: Letter from Cardinal Bea to Athenagoras, announcing a journey made by Pierre Duprey to several of the Middle East patriarchates. See DECLERCK (ed.), *Les agendas* (n. 7), p. XXXVI: “Nous avons déjà signalé le voyage à Moscou, fin janvier 1963, pour aller chercher Mgr Slipyj, qui venait d'être libéré par les autorités soviétiques. Précisons ici que Willebrands était l'homme tout indiqué pour accomplir cette mission hautement délicate: en effet, il était allé au patriarcat de Moscou du 27 septembre au 2 octobre 1962 pour obtenir – avec succès – l'envoi d'observateurs et il avait noué ensuite d'excellentes relations avec ces observateurs russes. Il était donc parfaitement au courant de la situation”. Also see pp. 36-37. On July 5, 1963: “Le matin j'ai également téléphoné à Visser't Hooft. À Montréal nous aurons l'occasion de nous parler en toute tranquillité. Il dit que les nouvelles de l'Orient sont très mauvaises. Quand je lui dis que, à Athènes, le Père Mateos de l'Institut Oriental a encore parlé au patriarche Athénagoras et que celui-ci disait qu'une nouvelle invitation au nom de Paul VI serait très importante, Visser't Hooft répondait: alors je peux seulement dire qu'il tient un double langage”.

36. See TA 18, July 24, 1962: Letter from Bea to Athenagoras: “Notre Secrétariat a l'honneur d'inviter Votre Sainteté à envoyer en qualité d'observateurs délégués au II Concile du Vatican, deux ecclésiastiques ou théologiens de votre confiance dont vous voudrez bien nous faire connaître les noms avant le 15 septembre”. In another letter, on the same date, Bea informs the patriarch that invitations have been extended to other patriarchates, including the autocephalous Churches. See TA 19. In response, Emilianos Timiadis – present at

III. THE SECOND MOMENT

1. *A Time of Audacious Symbolic Gestures*

The preconciliar conversations in early 1962 did not remain without consequences. Roman Catholics approached the Council with an interest in conversation and dialogue, which was reflected in an increasing amount of mutual visits³⁷ and conversations between the Secretariat for Unity and the Ecumenical Patriarchate³⁸. In the coming years Willebrands, Dumont, and Pierre Duprey constituted a core group that lead the process. A firm foundation was laid, which in these council years, culminated in three distinct events, each of them bearing Msgr. Willebrands' mark. We will briefly discuss each event, and pay particular attention to Willebrands' role in them. It will become clear that the contacts between Rome became more official as well as more public. A new situation emerged in that for the first in centuries there was a

Vatican II as an observer for the WCC – informed the Secretariat on Octobre 10, 1962 that the Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate will refrain from sending observers. See TA 21-22: “le patriarcat œcuménique, après avoir examiné la question, a jugé, en accord avec les autres Églises orthodoxes autocéphales, que l’envoi d’observateurs à ce concile n’est pas possible”.

37. It should be added that Willebrands already returned to Constantinople on June 1, 1962, as is testified in a letter from Bea to Athenagoras, on June 18, 1962. See TA, 15. On December 8, 1962, Cardinal Bea informed the patriarch that Fr. Duprey would undertake a journey to visit several patriarchates in the Middle East (TA 23). Also, Willebrands remained well informed of other conversations, which is evidenced by his agendas. See DECLERCK (ed.), *Les agendas* (n. 7), p. 35. July 3, 1963: “17 h: Le Père Mateos de l’Istituto Orientale au Secrétariat. Il est allé au Mont Athos et dans la suite il a encore rencontré le patriarche Athénagoras à Athènes. Il en a gardé une impression positive”.

38. Next to the ongoing bilateral contact, Willebrands constantly informed Constantinople of the evolving relationships between the Secretariat and the other Churches, thereby creating goodwill and avoiding miscommunications. See for instance his letter of April 18, 1962, published in TA 12: “Dans l’entretemps, j’ai visité d’autres communautés chrétiennes, en particulier Sa Grâce l’archevêque de Cantorbéry, Dr. Ramsey, le président de l’église évangélique en Allemagne, Dr. Scharf, et j’ai assisté à une réunion des organisations confessionnelles mondiales à Genève où j’ai eu l’occasion d’exposer la possibilité qui s’offre d’envoyer des observateurs au Second Concile du Vatican. Après ces conversations avec ces diverses communautés chrétiennes, je suis très désireux de rendre à nouveau visite à Votre Sainteté et de lui fournir quelques détails plus précis sur les observateurs-délégués au Second Concile du Vatican”. This letter is a result of Willebrands' visit to Geneva in early April 1962, where he had discussions with WCC-representatives, including Emilanos Timiadis and Vitali Borovoj. See CSVII: F. Willebrands 30: *Handwritten Report: Informative Talks Regarding Observers at Vatican II*, April 4, 1962, 6 p. On July 8, 1963, Bea wrote another letter to Athenagoras, inviting him to send “deux ecclésiastiques ou théologiens de votre confiance à titre d’observateurs-délégués de votre Église à ce Concile”. See TA 30.

series of serene and important public gestures³⁹ in which the heads of the churches entered into direct contact with one another. All the while, Willebrands and his collaborators continued behind the scenes in order to facilitate these contacts.

2. *The Pope Writes a Letter to the Patriarch*

A first example of Willebrands' role *en coulisse* is best illustrated in the "official" evolving correspondence between Rome and Istanbul. This correspondence culminated in a historical letter from Pope Paul VI to Patriarch Athenagoras, signed September 20, 1963⁴⁰. The letter was of historical importance since this was the first letter of its kind since 1584. It constituted a symbolic gesture that was also the result of the previous behind the scenes activities. In addition, it also served as an impetus for deepened contact among two Churches now described as "two sisters"⁴¹. When looking at Willebrands' role in the dialogue process, we should also look at the content of the letter. This document carefully and precisely listed a series of existing points of agreement, publicly illustrating the already real but yet imperfect communion between Rome and Constantinople. Both are united:

[par] le don de l'Évangile du salut, par le don du même baptême, du même sacerdoce célébrant la même eucharistie, l'unique sacrifice de l'unique Seigneur de l'Église. Que cette célébration nous donne d'avoir toujours plus en nous les "sentiments qui sont dans le Christ Jésus" et de pénétrer plus profondément dans la signification et les exigences de sa prière à son Père

39. On this, see P. DUPREY, *I gesti ecumenici di Paolo VI*, in *Paolo VI e l'ecumenismo* (n. 6), 198-214.

40. TA 33, Letter from Pope Paul VI to Athenagoras, September 20, 1963: "La charge que le Seigneur nous a confiée en tant que successeur sur ce siège du coryphée des apôtres, nous rend anxieux de tout ce qui regarde l'union des chrétiens et de tout ce qui peut contribuer à rétablir entre eux la parfaite concorde". See the succinct note Willebrands made in DECLERCK (ed.), *Les agendas* (n. 7), p. 57. September 20, 1963: "Chez Mgr Cardinale: est-ce qu'on a envoyé des invitations [pour l'ouverture de la 2^{ème} session du concile] aux non-chrétiens? Non. La lettre au patriarche Athénagoras".

41. The notion of the "sister Churches" is of great significance ecumenically speaking in light of the fact that Athenagoras used it to refer to the relationship between the two Churches before the 1054 parting of the ways. In this sense, it was appropriated by the advisors of Paul VI and then used in a prominent way in Paul VI's brief *Anno Ineunte*, of July 25, 1967, which pointed to the hope for full communion. See TA 176: "Dei beneficio fit ut nostrae Ecclesiae se iterum sorores agnoscant, nihil impediens difficultatibus superiore tempore inter nos ortis. Christo Iesu nos illuminante, facillime animadvertimus quantopere oporteat, his victis difficultatibus, eo pervenire ut communio, quae utraque partem devincit, quaeque iam tam est ferax, cumulate perfecta evadat".

“qu’ils soient un, moi en eux et toi en moi, afin qu’ils soient consommés dans l’unité”⁴².

Even when signed by the Pope, the archives make clear that this text was drafted by key players in the Secretariat. Again, those drafting it were the same “three musketeers” namely, Willebrands, Duprey, and Dumont. With the support of Cardinal Bea these three men constituted the centre of Roman Catholic ecumenical commitments with Constantinople. Once it was made public, the drafted letter that these men so delicately authored – which was triggered by an earlier one directed to the pope by Maximos of Sardes – officially set in motion what has become known to the public as the “dialogue of charity” between the Vatican and Phanar, a process that was pushed even further by Athenagoras’ words addressed to Paul VI after the closure of the Pan-orthodox Conference of Rhodes in October 1963⁴³.

3. *From Rome to Jerusalem*

A second major event where the Dutch Monsignor played a role behind the curtains received even more media attention and can rightly be considered as a major historic and symbolic gesture: the encounter of the Pope and the Patriarch in Jerusalem in January 1964. By the end of the Council’s tumultuous second period, Willebrands was very busy with the presentation of the first *Schema de œcumenismo* to the Council Fathers on November 8, 1963. Despite his heavy workload, with the help of a few members of the Secretariat⁴⁴ he was involved in the practical preparations for the papal visit to Jerusalem, which announced by Paul VI in the Council hall on December 4, 1963. We will now focus on, the preparations that helped to make this historic meeting possible.

From the perspective of the SCUF-secretary, which was active on a variety of fronts in the council organization, the process of gaining the

42. TA 33.

43. See TA 35, on November 22, 1963. Letter from Athenagoras to Paul VI: “Nous aussi à qui le Seigneur a enseigné de nous considérer les uns les autres comme de la même famille, ainsi qu’il convient aux membres de son saint corps qui est l’Église, nous qui, en vertu de la relation mutuelle propre aux membres, n’avons qu’un seul Seigneur et Sauveur à la grâce de qui nous communions dans les sacrements, nous estimons ne pouvoir rien nous offrir de plus précieux les uns les autres que l’offrande de la communion dans la charité qui, selon l’apôtre, ‘excuse tout, croit tout, supporte tout’, communion autrefois ferme dans le lien de la paix de nos saintes églises et qui, maintenant, se renouvelle par la grâce du Seigneur”.

44. As noted by Card. Bea, the situation proved quite complex for the SCUF. See S. SCHMIDT, *Augustin Bea: Der Kardinal der Einheit*, Graz, Styria, 1989.

Pope's trust was as important for the SCUF-secretary as the ongoing load of correspondence with those surrounding the Ecumenical Patriarch. The drafting of Paul VI's historical letter by Willebrands and his collaborators illustrates the amount of trust gained by the secretariat's staff members on both sides of the ecclesial divide. Relying on Montini's trust, the diplomatic activity silently deployed behind the scenes in December was crucial for the success of the most publicized events of the conciliar period. One may compare Willebrands' role with that of a movie director: he shies away from the spotlights, and the public sees the actors on the screen. But, along with representatives of the Vatican State Secretariat, Willebrands was directing screenplay behind the meeting on the Mount of Olives.

Pierre Duprey, was sent to Constantinople for further arrangements⁴⁵ and the secretary himself was busy with the drafting of the protocols for the Jerusalem meeting in great detail. Finding the middle ground between the three parties involved is an interesting exercise in diplomatic equilibrium. The protocols were drafted in close contact with cardinal Testa and members of the congregation for the Oriental Churches⁴⁶ on the one side, and in consultation with substitute Dell'Acqua from the Vatican Secretariat of State on the other side. All the while, Willebrands took care of the third party: the patriarchal envoys Athenagoras of Thyateira and Meliton of Heliopolis⁴⁷, and their wishes from the side of Constantinople⁴⁸. Finally, the protocols for the meeting were completed and signed in Dell'Acqua's office on December 30⁴⁹, in the presence of the patriarchal delegates, and of Willebrands and Duprey.

45. In regard to Duprey's visit, see the patriarchat's communiqué of December 11, 1963, in *TA* 38: "Sa sainteté a reçu hier mardi 10 décembre le très révérend p. Pierre Duprey, envoyé spécial du Vatican qui lui a remis, selon le protocole, la lettre de présentation de ses autorités et lui a donné, selon la mission qu'il avait reçue, des informations sur le pèlerinage aux lieux saints de Sa Sainteté le pape Paul VI".

46. See DECLERCK (ed.), *Les agendas* (n. 7), p. 83. On December 10, 1963: "11h30: Convoqué chez le card. Testa en rapport avec le voyage du Saint-Père en Terre sainte. Si je sais quelque chose au sujet des réactions d'Athénagoras?"

47. On December 26, 1963, Athenagoras announced that two delegates would be sent to Rome in order to prepare for the meeting. See *TA* 41: "les envoyés porteront à votre vénérable sainteté, les pensées, et les désirs que nous avons ici au sujet de cette rencontre, et en même temps ils sont autorisés à élaborer en commun et fraternellement avec des représentants du même rang ce qui a trait à cette sainte rencontre dans le Seigneur qui aura lieu s'il plaît à Dieu et qui est désirée de part et d'autre".

48. Bea's secretary had many meetings with the envoys, together with Msgr Jean-François Arrighi. He also maintained contacts with the Greek ambassador in Rome.

49. Georgetown University (henceforth GU): F. Long, *Rencontres du Saint Père et des patriarches à Jérusalem: Protocols Approved and Signed by Archbishop Dell'Acqua and Metropolitan Athenagoras of Thyateira*, Dec. 30, 1963. The same file in Long's papers

Willebrands stepped out of the director's chair for a moment when he sought to raise awareness of this issue among Italians by publishing a lengthy article in the periodical *La Rocca* in which he explained the *Aspetti ecumenici del pellegrinaggio di Paolo VI*. In this article, Willebrands voiced the pope's attitude, but at the same time was highly sensitive to Athenagoras' point of view. He wrote:

tout le mystère de Jérusalem est voilé par la situation concrète actuelle [...] La division des membres du Christ a laissé tomber en ruine le temple qui devrait être le grand symbole de l'unité catholique, l'église de la résurrection du Christ. Qu'il serait beau de voir une communauté hiérosolymitaine bien vivante, multiple en ses liturgies sacrées, mais unie dans une seule foi et dans une communion semblable à celle d'antan⁵⁰.

On top of this, he attempted to "manage" the reactions from members of other Churches, among them Lukas Vischer, a WCC-representative who appeared to take a rather negative stance to Athenagoras' insistence on an invitation toward other Church leaders for common prayer⁵¹. In fact, Athenagoras – who had already called for the Church leaders to undertake a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1959 – immediately picked up on the initiative and in spite of overall negative reactions from the side of the autocephalous Churches announced his plan to go to the Holy Land and meet the Pope⁵². Throughout the Pope's pilgrimage, both Duprey and Willebrands were present. Willebrands even lent his personal Greek-Latin version of the New Testament to the Patriarch and the Pope for their common prayer on the Mount of Olives...⁵³. During these days, Paul VI made the gesture of offering a chalice to Athenagoras, a gesture

contains a copy in an earlier version, in Willebrands' handwriting. Also, on that same December 30, 1963, Willebrands noted in his diary: "À mon bureau. Avec le P. Duprey et le métropolitain chez Mgr Dell'Acqua. Signature des protocoles pour la rencontre à Jérusalem".

50. J. WILLEBRANDS, *Aspetti ecumenici del pellegrinaggio di Paolo VI*, in *La Rocca*, January 1, 1964, pp. 15-16. Quotation taken from Willebrands' handwritten preparation in French, in CSVII: F. Willebrands 181.

51. See DECLERCK (ed.), *Les agendas* (n. 7), pp. 83-84, December 10, 1963: "Coup de téléphone de Lukas Vischer au sujet du pèlerinage du Saint-Père en Terre sainte. Qu'est-ce que nous pensons de la déclaration d'Athénagoras disant que tous les dirigeants des Églises devraient se rendre à Jérusalem pour prier pour l'unité avec le pape. Il trouve cela très irréaliste".

52. MARTANO, *Athenagoras* (n. 3), pp. 467-469.

53. Willebrands lent his copy of the Greek-Latin edition of the New Testament, by A. Merk, 1948. This pocket Bible version is contained in CSVII: F. Willebrands 367, and contains a small handwritten note recalling its unique function in January 1964 in the Holy City.

which would leave a lasting impression on the Patriarch, who in his own speech in Jerusalem spoke these words:

Depuis des siècles le monde chrétien vit dans la nuit de la séparation: ses yeux se sont fatigués à regarder dans les ténèbres. Puisse cette rencontre être l'aube d'un jour lumineux et béni, où les générations futures, communiant au même calice du saint corps et du précieux sang du Seigneur, loueront et glorifieront, dans la charité, la paix, et l'unité, l'unique Seigneur et Sauveur du monde.

4. *Overcoming the 1054 Anathema's*

Not only did the Jerusalem meeting constitute a major public gesture, it also reflected the sentiment with those working behind the scenes that the *filioque* was no longer a major stumbling block and the anathemas pronounced in the past could be overcome⁵⁴. For Willebrands, consistently presenting the SCUF with the ultimate goal of Christian unity, the sequence of events proved important: after the audacious act in January 1964 a further step was gradually prepared, a step that ventured more into the theological realm. This third moment was the lifting of the 1054 anathema's, pronounced simultaneously in Constantinople, and in St. Peter's basilica, on December 7, 1965.

After the Jerusalem pilgrimage, renewed attempts were made to invite observers from the ecumenical patriarchate, and upon the request of Paul VI a delegation under Msgr. Martin was sent to the patriarchate⁵⁵. At the same time John Long, Willebrands and Pierre Duprey were involved in contacts with the Vatican State Secretariat in order to invite Athenagoras for a visit to the city of Rome – a meeting for which the Secretary had already started drafting the protocols in consultation with the State Secretariat. A version of these protocols is conserved, dated April 15, 1964⁵⁶.

54. On this event and its background see the account of C.J. DUMONT, *La levée des anathèmes de 1054 (7 décembre 1965) et sa signification dans la conjoncture œcuménique contemporaine*, in A. BLANE – T. BIRD (eds.), *The Ecumenical World of Orthodox Civilization. FS Florovski*, Den Haag, Mouton, 1974, 193-214. A more recent and more elaborate study on the "Common Declaration" is found in M. VELATI, *Memoria e riconciliazione: La Dichiarazione comune di Paolo VI ed Athenagoras sulle scomuniche del 1054, in preparation*.

55. The TA 60 contains the announcement made by Cardinal Bea to Athenagoras on April 10, 1964, that Msgr Martin, Willebrands and Duprey would travel to Istanbul. Eight days later (see TA 61) Pope Paul VI personally announced the upcoming mission to the Ecumenical Patriarch.

56. GU: F. Long, Protocol Draft: *Venuta a Roma del patriarca ecumenico Atenagoras*, April 15, 1964. The document numbers three pages and deals with two topics. The first topic was the eventual visit of the Ecumenical Patriarch to Rome. The timeframe was well

This project, as well as the planning of the transfer of the relics of St. Andrew from the Vatican back to Patras, figures among the reasons why cardinal Bea's secretary made another journey to Constantinople, from April 21 to 24, 1964. The conversations between Willebrands and Athenagoras had an strikingly different tonality. A climate of mutual confidence reigned, and in contrast to the general topics addressed in the February 1962 talks, the two men immediately discussed very concrete projects: first, the possibility of the patriarchal visit to Rome – a project which would take a long time to accomplish, and second, the issue of lifting the anathemas pronounced by Cerularius and Humbert in 1053 and 1054⁵⁷.

This is striking and it reveals that the issue was already on Willebrands' agenda during the second intersession of Vatican II. Later, back in Rome, the issue was put on the Secretariat's agenda on 23 September 1964. This was indebted more to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Metropolitan Maxim Hermaniuk than to Willebrands⁵⁸. Hermaniuk shifted the matter into his report on the section in the *Schema De Œcumenismo* that dealt with the Eastern Churches, claiming that the excommunications pronounced by Cardinal Humbert in the midst of the eleventh century were void of any dogmatic content and could therefore be overcome. Hermaniuk's report states: "*ut ex historia hodie constat, in tota lucta hac nulla veritas dogmatica revera in dubium vocata fuisset*"⁵⁹. Although it caused some tension, the proposal benefitted from Constantinople's decision to send observers to the Council for the last period of Vatican II⁶⁰. With Willebrands' support, Hermaniuk presented this perspective to the Council Fathers on October 7, 1964, thereby rendering the discussion a part of the redaction history of the soon to be promulgated Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*. Hermaniuk's

discussed, keeping in mind that it should be avoided to give the impression to the public that the unity with the orthodox was re-established. The second topic was the return of St. Andrew's relics to Athens, which would first be discussed with Athenagoras, and then with the Metropolitan of Athens.

57. See DECLERCK (ed.), *Les agendas* (n. 7), pp. 109-112; Report of the visit from April 21-24, 1964: "Visite au patriarche [Athénagoras]. Vœux pour les fêtes pascales et pour le rétablissement de sa santé. Le patriarche: au sujet de la Rencontre et sur le concile".

58. SCHELKENS – SKIRA (eds.), *Second Vatican Council Diaries of Met. Maxim Hermaniuk* (n. 12), pp. 188-190.

59. The Greek Catholic Metropolitan's report is entitled *De ecclesiarum orientalium peculiari consideratione*, and can be found in the AS III/4, pp. 10-13.

60. See the telegram sent to Bea from the side of Athenagoras on September 10, 1964, in TA 72, reporting that the Constantinopolitan Synod had agreed to the sending of three official observers to Vatican II.

statement triggered ample press attention⁶¹, as well as some personal reactions. For example, as Hermaniuk wrote in his diary, Andrei Scrima, Athenagoras' personal representative at Vatican II, expressed his gratitude and called this "the highest degree of the ecumenical spirit of this Council". In view of the upcoming Pan-Orthodox Conference in February 1965, Scrima reported this to Athenagoras.

The Rhodes conference, then, ratified the patriarchal attempts to establish an official dialogue with Rome and take it further, a decision communicated to Paul VI by Meliton of Heliopolis⁶². In the slipstream of all this, the pope's conversation with Meliton, and later on with Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Myra proved to be crucial in the process towards the lifting of the anathema's. On July 16, 1965, Willebrands also discussed the issue with Chrysostomos and both men relied on the principal agreement of Athenagoras. The Patriarch was willing to move forward, the question now was whether the Pope would be willing to step into the same line. An audience with Paul VI in the presence of Willebrands and Emilianos Timiadis on October 9, 1965 was ultimately the decisive step. As Willebrands reported, the Pope talked about: "la question de l'excommunication de 1054. Pour ce dernier point, il propose une solution par [la création d'] une commission mixte (Rome – Constantinople) qui pourrait faire une étude et proposer une formule qui pourrait mettre fin à cette question"⁶³. The news quickly spread among other observers, as became clear from a passus in the

61. See H. FESQUET, *Responsabilité de Rome*, in *Le Monde* (October 9, 1964); R. LA VALLE, *Avvenire* (October 8, 1964). See A. WENGER, *Vatican II: Chronique de la quatrième session*, Paris, Cerf, 1966, pp. 450-452; also see A. SCRIMA, *Rom und Konstantinopel nach der Nichtigkeitserklärung der Banbulen*, in F. HUMMER (ed.), *Orthodoxie und Zweites Vatikanum: Dokumente und Stimmen aus der Ökumene*, Freiburg, Herder, 1966, 185-191. Y. CONGAR, *After Nine Hundred Years: The Background of the Schism between the Eastern and Western Churches*, New York, Fordham University Press, 1959, provides a broader history of the estrangement between East and West leading up to 1054 and beyond.

62. The ecumenically important results of the Third Pan-Orthodox Conference were reported to the pope in person by Meliton of Heliopolis, on February 16, 1965. See TA 87: "Ensuite, dans la deuxième conférence panorthodoxe, il [the orthodox Church] a décidé, en principe, d'entrer en dialogue avec elle, sur pied d'égalité. Dernièrement, dans la troisième conférence panorthodoxe, confirmant à l'unanimité son désir de ce dialogue et allant plus loin, il établit un programme en vue de promouvoir cette sainte cause et d'en poursuivre la réalisation et la réussite progressivement et sur des bases sûres". See TA 92. On March 31, 1965, Paul VI reacted to the decisions of the Pan-Orthodox Conference, insisting on the strong harmony underlying the Conference's statements and Vatican II's decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*.

63. DECLERCK (ed.), *Les agendas* (n. 7), p. 241. October 9, 1965.

unpublished Council Notes of Eugene Fairweather, on October 11, 1965:

Vischer told us about the misleading report circulated by Metropolitan Emilianos who claimed that the Pope (in a private audience) has stated his intention of withdrawing the excommunication of 1054. In fact (so Willebrands indicated) the suggestion was made by Emilianos and tactfully “fielded” by the Pope⁶⁴!

After some discussion, and with agreement of Dell’Acqua, a commission led by Willebrands was set up. The commission’s actions are documented in a set of papers contained in the John Long papers. Bea’s secretary was pinched between Michele Maccarrone’s own preparations – having already suggested a list of candidates to Cicognani – on the issue of 1054, and his contacts within the secretariat, where he and Bea confided the issue to Dumont, who – based on the account of the 1054 schism published in 1959 by his confrere Congar⁶⁵, drafted a first *Projet de déclaration commune*⁶⁶. Willebrands, yet again, had to consult with the State Secretariat, as he explained in his diary on November 4, 1965:

Copie de la lettre de Cicognani à Maccarrone concernant la commission mixte avec Constantinople. De sa propre initiative Maccarrone a proposé des candidats, qui ont été approuvés. Il est difficile de continuer de cette manière. Duprey est allé chez Dell’Acqua pour parler de cette question. Une solution a été proposée. Une lettre de moi à Dell’Acqua⁶⁷.

Finally, with papal approval, a commission, presided by Msgr. Willebrands, and including Michele Maccarrone, Alphonse Raes, Christophe-Jean Dumont, and Alphonse Stickler was set up⁶⁸. Although this is the official composition, John Long was present to take notes, and Pierre Duprey also assisted both of its meetings, held on November 12 and 14, 1965⁶⁹. On the basis of Dumont’s first draft, the group prepared a *Projet de*

64. Eugene Radbone Fairweather, *Unpublished Council Diary*, p. 202. A publication of the manuscript is in preparation under the auspices of Gilles Routhier (Université Laval) and Michael Attridge (University of Toronto), who have kindly allowed me to have access to this valuable source.

65. CONGAR, *After Nine Hundred Years* (n. 61).

66. GU: F. Long, *Projet de déclaration commune*, s.d., 3 p.

67. DECLERCK (ed.), *Les agendas* (n. 7), p. 253. November 4, 1965.

68. VELATI, *Separati ma fratelli* (n. 8), recounts the story of Maccarrone’s attempts to set up his own commission (composed of Maccarrone himself, V. Grumel, J. Ryan and H. Hunger), and illustrates how Willebrands and Bea succeeded in overcoming this initiative.

69. GU: F. Long, *Projet de déclaration commune*, November 15, 1965, 3 p. This document contains a series of handwritten corrections, recorded by John Long, and proposed by both Willebrands and Dumont.

déclaration commune, dated November 15. This version, however, was considerably revised in a small committee consisting of only Willebrands and Dumont, which lead to several additions and an explanatory note containing nine subsequent points⁷⁰. One of the more striking additions made in this private meeting was the insertion of the central phrase, where the Pope and the Patriarch jointly declare to:

regretter également et enlever de la mémoire et du milieu de l'Église les sentences d'excommunication, qui les ont suivis, et dont le souvenir opère jusqu'à nos jours comme un obstacle au rapprochement dans la charité, et les vouer à l'oubli⁷¹.

From November 21 to 24 the group was in Istanbul⁷² to join forces with a commission from the side of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in order to arrive at a final text for the declaration⁷³. The orthodox delegation was composed of Meliton of Heliopolis (president), Chrysostomos of Myra, Fr. Gabriele, Fr. Anastasiades, and archdeacon Fr. Evangelos. Andrei Scrima⁷⁴, who had already received the project at Willebrands' office on November 19, 1965⁷⁵. Pierre Duprey acted as secretary for both sides. The working basis for the mixed commission was the version of the text

70. GU: F. Long, *Explication du texte proposé pour une déclaration commune*, November, 15, 1965, 3 p. The document contains the names of Dumont and Willebrands.

71. The original phrase in the project reads: "vouloir les vouer à l'oubli afin qu'elles ne puissent plus être un obstacle au rapprochement dans la charité". See GU: F. Long, *Projet de déclaration commune*, November 15, 1965, p. 2. In their *Explication du texte*, p. 2, Willebrands and Dumont offered the following motivation: "y sont distingués 3 points, chacun avec sa nuance propre: réprouver – vouer à l'oubli – regretter (un mot plus fort que ce dernier p. ex. 'répudier', pourrait impliquer des conséquences excessives quant à l'état actuel de séparation)". For more details on the development of the final formulas, also see DECLERCK (ed.) *Les agendas* (n. 7), pp. 266-267.

72. On this journey, see G. CAPRILE, *Il Concilio Vaticano II*, vol. 5, Rome, La Civiltà cattolica, 1969, pp. 506-507.

73. The personal archives of Cardinal Bea contain a detailed account of the meeting between the Vatican and the Constantinople delegates. See ASV: F. Bea, 5, *Rapport synthétique sur le déroulement des conversations à Istanbul*, November 29, 1965. The report of the commission's activities is published in TA 124, the speeches held by the commission presidents Willebrands and Meliton of Heliopolis are found in TA 122 and 123.

74. Scrima was in Rome for the fourth period of the Vatican Council as a personal delegate of Athenagoras. See ASV: Conc. Vat. II, 115.1: Letter from Athenagoras to Bea, August 31, 1965.

75. DECLERCK (ed.), *Les agendas* (n. 7), p. 261. November 19, 1965: "Visite de Scrima au Secrétariat: je lui ai donné un projet pour Constantinople". Scrima played an important role in the contacts between Rome and the Phanar as personal envoy of Athenagoras. In particular as of September 1964, when Athenagoras had confided the guidance of the Greek-Orthodox community in Rome to Scrima. See ASV: Conc. Vat. II: 114.3: the dossier contains a letter from Athenagoras to Cardinal Bea, September 1, 1964, affirming this, and the correspondence on it between Msgr Willebrands and the State Secretariat.

provided by Willebrands and Dumont, which would essentially be adopted, first by the commission, then by Paul VI and Athenagoras. Willebrands and Meliton, the presidents of the two delegations preparing the *Common Declaration* were given the honour of presenting it to the Council Fathers on the Solemn Session of December 7, 1965. Willebrands read the statement aloud in front of the Council assembly⁷⁶. One day later, the Council officially closed and Willebrands' diary notes, as if it were a minor detail: "13.30: Déjeuner chez le Saint-Père"⁷⁷.

IV. THE THIRD MOMENT: FROM CONVERSATION TO CONCELEBRATION

Although several important events took place in the period in between, the third moment of intensified contact between the Phanar and Rome is situated at the end of the decade. Willebrands, now the SCUFC's cardinal president⁷⁸, having succeeded Cardinal Bea, traveled once again to Istanbul, on December 1 and 2, 1969 for an encounter with Athenagoras. The vicinity of both ecumenical pioneers is striking ... In his report, the cardinal cites the patriarch saying these words:

Quelle période de dix ans! Quel développement! La visite du grand cardinal Bea et surtout la visite du Pape Paul VI, que j'appelle toujours Paul II, marquent l'importance et le progrès de cette période. Et maintenant il faut franchir une autre étape et vous devez préparer cette étape, comme les autres. Vous êtes l'homme du destin et personne ne peut échapper à son destin.

The patriarch continued:

Je voudrais de nouveau rencontrer le Pape pour célébrer avec lui l'Eucharistie – un seul calice. Quand je suis allé à Jérusalem, le Pape m'a offert le calice, je ne l'avais pas demandé ni prévu, mais il savait que je le désirais et il me l'a offert. Qu'est-ce qui nous divise? Rien, absolument rien. Le Pape ne doit rien changer, l'infaillibilité de l'Église a toujours existé. Je suis toujours avec le Pape, il est le vrai chef et nous le suivons en tout et je veux célébrer l'eucharistie avec lui. Prenez courage et préparez cela. Le courage

76. The full text of the Common Declaration is found in TA 127.

77. DECLERCK (ed.), *Les agendas* (n. 7), p. 269.

78. Willebrands was made cardinal on April 28, 1969, after his being appointed as Cardinal Bea's successor two weeks before. Among many letters of congratulations, on March 31, 1969 he got a warm personal letter from the former WCC-secretary general, who wrote that "if the signs are well read, this should certainly be seen as a confirmation of the vast work started by cardinal Bea and yourself, and which has become of eminent importance for the entire oikoumene". See F. WCC, Geneva.

seul ne suffit peut-être pas, alors un peu d'audace, mais vous devez le faire⁷⁹.

For a third time, Willebrands found himself squarely in the centre of the ecumenical rapprochement between the patriarchate and his own Church. Greatly moved by Athenagoras' willingness to step beyond the "dialogue of charity" and enter into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church, Willebrands was quite aware of some of the possible objections that could be made. During the talk he raised some objections, such as the negative stance on intercommunion between Orthodox and Catholic faithful taken up by the Patriarch of Jerusalem Benediktos, and by the US Greek-Orthodox Church, voiced by Archbishop Jakovos. Athenagoras showed himself to be aware of the difficulties, but remained committed to it provided that the Pope made the offer. Willebrands wrote:

Le patriarche, avec un sourire et un geste d'assurance, a dit: Tout le peuple le désire ardemment et tous les évêques sont bons. Le patriarche Benediktos est ce qu'il est, mais il l'acceptera, et même en Grèce on suivra après. Mais cette fois le Pape doit prendre la décision et moi je peux et je veux suivre. L'initiative ne peut pas partir de moi. C'est le Pape qui doit décider et quand le Pape aura décidé le peuple et les églises orthodoxes accepteront et même les gouvernements l'accepteront⁸⁰.

In private, before leaving Willebrands confided to the Patriarch that Paul VI said: "I would be willing to travel to the North Pole to encounter the patriarch and concelebrate with him". Athenagoras said: It's not necessary to travel to the North Pole, St. Peter's basilica will do fine". Thereupon, the cardinal entered into conversation on the practical consequences of the conversation with the Patriarch and received full support from Metropolitan Meliton of Chalcedon.

In consultation with Jérôme Hamer, Duprey, and Msgr. Fortino, Willebrands took the matter further. In the first half of December, he drafted a "*Note sur les implications d'une éventuelle concélébration eucharistique entre le pape et le patriarche Athenagoras*", which was to be discussed in a private audience with Paul VI on December 22⁸¹. In this note to the pope, Willebrands listed a series of ecclesiological implica-

79. GU: F. Long, Report entitled *Rencontre du cardinal Willebrands avec S.S. le patriarche Athénagoras 1 à Istanbul, 1-2 décembre 1969*, dated December 9, 1969, p. 1.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

81. GU: F. Long, J. Willebrands, *Note sur les implications d'une éventuelle concélébration eucharistique entre le pape et le patriarche Athénagoras*, December 1969, 6 p.

tions and stressed the importance of visible communion through the fact of concelebration. He also discussed the sole issue that remained problematic for Athenagoras in the past, namely the idea of papal primacy and the different theological evolutions in the Orthodox and the Western Church, including the variety in theological, ritual and spiritual customs existing prior to the 1054 and those after the schism. In particular the value of the later Roman Catholic definitions of faith were discussed. For instance, on the level of ecclesiological declarations, Willebrands' report points to the fact that Vatican I's definition of papal infallibility is not "*in se*" rejected by several orthodox leaders and that "*aucun concile panorthodoxe ne l'a refusé formellement*". Willebrands stressed the importance of the council statements of the post eleventh century Latin Councils. Tacitly applying a theory of the hierarchy of councils, Willebrands proposed that the conciliar decisions made in the Latin Church after the 11th century should be regarded henceforth as responses to the historical demands of the Western Churches. The Cardinal presented his thought to Paul VI as follows:

Les décisions des Conciles catholiques postérieurs au 11^e siècle (Conciles du Latran, de Trente, etc.) seraient considérées comme répondant à des exigences historiques de l'Église de l'Occident. Sans nier le développement continu qui a lieu dans l'Église sous l'inspiration du Saint-Esprit, ainsi que la valeur de certaines de ces décisions pour l'Église universelle, on ne doit pas les considérer en dehors de leur contexte historique (discussions entre écoles théologiques occidentales, la réforme protestante, etc.) ni insister sur l'application univoque des décisions de ces Conciles aux Églises d'Orient, ni leur demander une reconnaissance de ces Conciles comme œcuméniques⁸².

The position taken by Willebrands relies heavily on a 1965 book by Vittorio Peri⁸³, who clarified that the notion of an "ecumenical" council applied in contemporary canon law was a post-tridentine one. Until Belarmine, a council could not be called "ecumenical" due to the absence of the bishops of the East⁸⁴.

82. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

83. V. PERI, *I concili e le chiese: Ricerca storica sulla tradizione d'universalità dei sinodi ecumenici*, Rome, Studium, 1965, pp. 59-64. This study by Peri relied on an earlier contribution of his on the differing length and content of the various "lists" of ecumenical councils since Trent. See V. PERI, *Il numero dei concili ecumenici nella tradizione cattolica moderna*, in *Aevum* 37 (1963) 430-501. Also of influence was Y. CONGAR's, *Primauté des quatre premiers conciles œcuméniques*, in the Chevetogne study *Le Concile et les conciles: Contribution à l'histoire de la vie conciliaire de l'Église*, Paris, Cerf, 1960, 75-109.

84. PERI, *I concili e le chiese* (n. 83), pp. 47-48. In fact, the SCUF-representatives were quite aware of the fact that Peri filled in a request for study expressed by SCUF-president

Willebrands' *Note* also discussed the delicate position of the Uniate Churches⁸⁵, pointing out that this option should be avoided when entering into further conversation with Constantinople. Willebrands' opinion at the time was clearly that the only option for ecumenical reconciliation with the Orthodox outside of Uniatism was to re-establish full communion between Rome and the Orthodox, *i.e.* Constantinople. The document closes with a set of practical issues and sensitivities to bear in mind. Apparently, the Pope agreed and in late December, a restricted commission was set up which included Duprey, Dumont, and Wilhelm de Vries, a German Jesuit priest from the Oriental Institute in Rome. Informed of the pope's agreement to study the option of concelebration, Duprey asked both Dumont and De Vries to prepare a recommendation, based on the study of Willebrands' note. All of them received a copy of the *Note* with the requirement to return to Duprey. The three met again on January 1, 1970. The reports offered divided opinions, and Duprey decided to present them to Willebrands. He later reported on the Cardinal's decision as follows:

Le cardinal Willebrands, après lecture de ces deux rapports, décidait de consulter le P. Louis Bouyer, bon connaisseur de l'orthodoxie et ami connu depuis longtemps pour avoir son avis sur les deux rapports et sur toute la question⁸⁶.

Next, Willebrands asked Pierre Duprey to solicit a reaction from Louis Bouyer, who then, sent his report to Willebrands by February 10. Two days later, Duprey drafted a survey of the three reports. It is clear that Duprey, Bouyer and Willebrands did not agree with De Vries, whose report was dismissed for its demands that full agreement be reached on quasi all theological and practical points as well as on conciliar formulas before entering into the act of concelebration. The *communis opinio* was that De Vries' approach would signify a return to Uniatism⁸⁷, something

Cardinal Bea, in an interview published in *Vita* 249 (January 22, 1964), where he stated, on p. 24: "la chiesa latina riconosce 21 concili ecumenici, mentre gli ortodossi riconoscono il carattere di universalità soltanto ai Concili celebrati nell'Oriente prima della separazione del secolo XI. [...] Bisognerà anzitutto studiare attentamente e approfondire l'attuale mentalità e dottrina, sia nell'Occidente che nell'Oriente riguardo a tutti questi punti".

85. In fact, the reaction of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was to well prepared, as Willebrands made clear in his report. In order to understand the background to this, see K. SCHELKENS, *Vatican Diplomacy after the Cuban Missile Crisis: New Light on the Release of Josyf Slipyj*, in *Catholic Historical Review* 98 (2011) 680-713.

86. GU: F. Long, P. Duprey, *Nouvelle note sur l'éventuelle concélébration eucharistique du Pape et du Patriarche Athénagoras*, February 12, 1970.

87. On the position of De Vries, also see V. PERI, *Dialogo, osmosi fraterna di realtà ecclesiali nuove e antiche*, in J.-M.R. TILLARD, *Agapè: Études en l'honneur de Mgr Pierre*

Willebrands wished to avoid at all cost. Attacking Peri's work, De Vries demanded a broad agreement regarding the definitions made by the post 11th century Latin Councils. De Vries could not accept Peri's conclusions that offered room for a mere partial and contextualized acceptance of recent Latin Council decrees, with further issues and concretization of diversity to be resolved *a posteriori*. On this point Duprey criticized De Vries, stating:

la position provient d'une vue insuffisamment historique et dynamique de la tradition. Il ne fait pas de distinction entre le contenu des affirmations de foi et les expressions et formulations qu'elles ont reçues après la séparation, dans un contexte culturel unilatéralement occidental. Ces expressions et formulations rendent souvent le contenu des affirmations de foi méconnaissables pour les orientaux étrangers à la culture occidentale. Ils ont donc parfois rejeté ces affirmations alors qu'elles ne professaient rien d'autre que ce que l'Orient confessait en d'autres termes⁸⁸.

This was precisely Cardinal Willebrands' position. Dumont, a long-standing friend of the Dutch Cardinal, was also in favour of taking a factual step on the basis of the already established but imperfect communion, and referred to the decision taken by the Moscow Patriarchate to allow Catholic faithful to the administration of sacraments in the Russian Orthodox Church. Finally, Duprey's *Nouvelle note* picked up Bouyer's remarks, which are generally supportive of the initiative. Harkening back to the principles laid out in *Unitatis Redintegratio* 14 to 17, Bouyer first and foremost underlined the need for a mutual acceptance of diversity on the levels of discipline, spirituality, liturgy and theology. This, Bouyer, claimed along with Willebrands, both the Pope and the Patriarch were willing to accept, referring back to the historical journeys of Paul VI to Constantinople, and to Athenagoras' visit to St. Peter's basilica⁸⁹. On the ecclesiological level, both Fr. Dumont and Fr. Bouyer

Duprey (Analecta Chambesiana, 3), Centre orthodoxe du patriarcat œcuménique, Chambésy – Genève, 2000, 345-392, see on pp. 364-365: "L'importante ammissione di fatto sembrava in certa misura accogliere il pensiero sui patriarcati orientali, che aveva per decenni animato la ricerca del Pontificio Istituto Orientale, in particolare dei padri M. Jugie e W. de Vries, e di chi ne aveva abbracciato le conclusioni, dal patriarcha melchita Massimo IV Saigh ai circoli teologici della 'Pro Oriente' nella Vienna del card. König. Tutti questi progetti di avvicinamento con i cristiani orientali restavano tuttavia conformi, o almeno compatibili, con la visione uniatistica della ricomposizione dell'unità dei cristiani mediante il riconoscimento dei riti liturgici e la concessione di un diritto canonico orientale riveduto e corretto e corretto da parte del Romano Pontefice".

88. GU: F. Long, P. Duprey, *Nouvelle note* (n. 86), pp. 1-2.

89. *Ibid.*, p. 3: "il souligne les conditions nécessaires pour qu'un tel acte soit fructueux: acceptation concrète de part et d'autre de la diversité dans l'unité sur les plans disciplinaire, spirituel, liturgique et théologique. Le décret *Unitatis Redintegratio* a été

pointed out that any act of concelebration would also imply the Roman Church's further commitment to act "collegially" with the East in regard to everything concerning the universal Church. After considering of all the reports, Duprey's *Nouvelle note* decided that the conclusions of Cardinal Willebrands' first *Note* to the Pope remain the basis of further evolution. Willebrands' conclusions had acknowledged that there were certainly some risks. Political factors also had to be taken into account, as well as the reactions of the wider Orthodox community. It also concluded that the act of concelebration would be one of audacity yet not an isolated act, and that it should be presented clearly and primordially as an act of reconciliation with Constantinople in order to avoid offending the other Orthodox Churches. The *Nouvelle note* concludes:

Il semble que l'on peut reprendre les conclusions de la note déjà remise par le cardinal Willebrands. La première partie de la note "implications ecclésiologiques" doit être complétée et nuancée par les remarques du P. Bouyer. Il serait désirable que le cardinal Willebrands prenne contact avec le métropolite Meliton pour voir quel est le résultat de la réflexion faite au Phanar depuis décembre⁹⁰.

Some six weeks later, Willebrands' *Note* – with some revisions – provided a working basis for a mixed commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This small commission secretly gathered at Chambésy-Geneva on two occasions, from 27 to 29 April, and from 14 to 15 May. On the side of the Orthodox the commission was composed of archimandrite Damaskinos Papandreou and John Zizioulas, and on the Roman Catholic side by Pierre Duprey and Emmanuel Lanne⁹¹. A third meeting took place in Zürich from June 5 to 7, 1970⁹² and ultimately lead to a fourteen page-long report, to be studied in all discretion by Paul VI and by Athenagoras.

The Mixed Commission's Zürich Report

The Zürich report, dated June 6, 1970, was a unique document of particular importance. Although the advice offered was positive, the act

clair sur ce point. Le Saint-Père a été plus explicite encore dans le discours prononcé dans la cathédrale de Phanar à Istanbul. Le patriarche Athénagoras a parlé dans le même sens en son discours prononcé à St. Pierre".

90. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

91. MAHIEU, *Paul VI et les orthodoxes* (n. 2), p. 197.

92. GU: F. Long, *Rapport de la commission mixte Église Catholique – Patriarcat œcuménique sur la possibilité d'une concélébration entre le pape et le patriarche œcuménique*, 6 juin 1970, 14 p.

of joint concelebration did not take place. Nevertheless, the report expanded the path paved by Willebrands' notes, and illustrates the itinerary of an entire decade of growing encounter between Rome and Constantinople. The report opened with a survey of fundamental presuppositions⁹³. The act of concelebration, the commission explained, supposes in both fact and principle, a unity which is manifested in and through the concelebration itself. Then the report discussed the theme of legitimate diversity and explained how this diversity had existed before the 1054 schism and was not experienced in terms of incompatibility⁹⁴. Furthermore, the report clearly stated that the 1965 upheaval of the anathema's had created a new situation. The existing sacramental reality, the existence of a hierarchy and shared articles of faith are mentioned as elements of convergence.

The report also acknowledged that "une concélébration entre le pape et patriarche est donc possible à condition qu'elle soit de part et d'autre l'expression de la volonté de reprendre la vie commune et qu'elle soit le commencement de cette nouvelle vie ensemble"⁹⁵. Again, the two sister Churches refer back to the lifting of the anathema's and the principle of lawful variety formulated in *Unitatis Redintegratio* 17, stressing the need to interpret them as mutually complementary rather than as conflicting. Further on, the commission focused on the value of the council declarations made after the 1054 separation, binding together the principles of a hierarchy of truths and of a hierarchy of councils. In this sense it followed Willebrands' initial report, which was itself influenced by Peri. The Roman Catholic Church's dogmatic definitions are divided into four categories:

on peut donc répondre affirmativement à la question préalable. Les dogmes définis par les catholiques depuis la séparation n'ont pas brisé l'unité de la foi existant depuis les origines entre l'Église catholique et l'Église orthodoxe. Cependant, de par leur séparation séculaire et leur évolution indépen-

93. In this section, I cannot offer a full-scale description of the report. For a more deepened survey of its contents, I refer the reader to the article by MAHIEU, *La concélébration projetée* (n. 11), pp. 42-50. This excellent contribution takes this document as its point of departure and then moves on to the way in which the results of the commission's work slipped into ecumenical discourse, as well as to a discussion of the obstacles encountered.

94. GU: F. Long, *Rapport de la commission mixte* (n. 92), p. 3: "Il ne faut pas oublier que l'accord doctrinal entre l'Orient et l'Occident dans les onze premiers siècles n'a pas toujours été total et que, notamment sur le point qui fera l'objet des définitions du 1^{er} Concile du Vatican, on avait dès le 4^{ème}, 5^{ème}, et surtout 6^{ème} siècle à Rome des vues que l'Orient ne partageait pas. Cependant ces divergences sur l'interprétation du rôle des évêques de Rome dans la communion universelle des Églises n'ont jamais, à cette époque, été vues comme une cause imposant la rupture de communion".

95. GU: F. Long, *Rapport de la commission mixte* (n. 92), p. 9.

dante, des malentendus existent sur la formulation de certains aspects de cette foi que l'Église d'Occident a été dans la nécessité de défendre ou de développer durant ces derniers siècles⁹⁶.

Then, more practical problems are discussed and the need to carefully deal with the position of the Uniate hierarchies, and their relatedness to the Orthodox Church. Here too, the report is hopeful when it says:

la situation de certaines Églises catholiques orientales pose une question plus délicate mais en même temps cette approche offre la seule chance actuelle de solution de leurs douloureux problèmes. On pense notamment aux Églises catholiques orientales d'Ukraine et de Roumanie [...] On peut espérer que les évêques de ces Églises seraient admis dans la vie synodale de l'Église orthodoxe, alors, par hypothèse, en communion canonique avec l'Église catholique⁹⁷.

Finally, we should point to one striking point where the relationship with the reformed communities is dealt with. At this juncture, the mixed commission moved away from Willebrands' initial report for the pope. This point would remain a lasting problem. The report, on page thirteen, states:

Dans le contexte de l'Église en Occident aujourd'hui, il serait souhaitable qu'une déclaration très précise et très énergique du pape souligne que ce qui se réalise entre catholiques et orthodoxes ne veut aucunement dire que dorénavant est implicitement autorisée une intercommunion généralisée en Occident entre catholiques et anglicans protestants. Tout au contraire, la pleine communion retrouvée entre l'Orient et l'Occident impliquerait que les deux Églises agissent désormais de concert dans leurs relations avec les églises et communautés issues de la Réforme⁹⁸.

Finally, the report states that for psychological reasons it would be wise to organize a double concelebration, a first one in an Orthodox Church according to the Orthodox liturgy, and a second one in Rome according to the Roman liturgy.

Today, one is struck by the extent to which the step towards full communion was prepared, and supported by both hierarchies. On a fundamental level, the secret commission's work reached the point of stating that full agreement is essentially possible between Rome and Constantinople, provided that both can maintain their distinct identities. Nevertheless, a growing hesitation in both Churches, due to a variety of reasons, would cause the process to be aborted. Among such reasons is

96. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

97. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

98. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

the Roman fear of the implications of full communion with Constantinople in regard to the demands for concelebration with other, mainly non-Orthodox Churches. Increasingly, difficulties were raised concerning the ecumenical contacts between the Orthodox – longstanding members of the Geneva World Council and engaged in their own bilateral contacts with reformed ecclesial communities – and the implications these might have for the Roman Catholic Church on the occasion of its full communion with Constantinople. At the beginning of the 1970s, the new ecumenical decade posed its own problems⁹⁹, and the Secretariat felt the need to issue two clarifying statements on sacramental sharing.¹⁰⁰ A significant factor in play was the Vatican's complex relationship with the World Council of Churches, in which Rome declared that it could not enter into full membership¹⁰¹.

Rome was also concerned about a possible weakening of contacts with other Orthodox Churches in the event of a full communion with Constantinople¹⁰². From the side of the Patriarchate, it appeared more difficult than initially foreseen to find support with the wider orthodox community¹⁰³, which caused the Patriarch to consult, in late 1971, Willebrands and Duprey on the idea of the establishment of a pan-orthodox commission to study the possibility of concelebration and full communion¹⁰⁴.

99. See T.F. STRANSKY, *An Historical Sketch: The Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity*, in T.F. STRANSKY – J.B. SHEERIN (eds.), *Doing the Truth in Charity: Statements of Pope Paul VI, Popes John Paul I, John Paul II, and the Secretariat for Christian Unity 1964-1980* (Ecumenical Documents, 1), New York, Paulist, 1982, 5-15, pp. 10-11.

100. J. WILLEBRANDS – J. HAMER, *Declaration on the Position of the Catholic Church Concerning a Common Eucharist between Christians of Different Confessions*, January 7, 1970, in *SPCU-Information Service* 9 (1970) 21-30.

101. See on this story J. GROOTAERS' book, *Rome et Genève à la croisée des chemins (1968-1972): Un ordre du jour inachevé*, Paris, Cerf, 2005.

102. See Duprey's words on this in the section *Discussione*, in *Paolo VI e l'ecumenismo* (n. 6), p. 318: "La commissione giunse alla conclusione che, dal punto di vista teologico, non vi era nessuna obiezione fondamentale ad una tale concelebrazione, ma che essa, dal punto di vista prudenziale e pastorale per le nostre relazioni con l'ortodossia, avrebbe rischiato di creare una situazione drammatica tra le Chiese Ortodosse, e che era dunque da evitare".

103. An interesting survey of Orthodox engagement in ecumenism in the 1970s was published by M.A. FAHEY, *Orthodox Ecumenism and Theology, 1970-1978*, in *Theological Studies* 39 (1978) 446-485.

104. See the cryptic notes in CSVII: F. Willebrands 321-323: Agenda Card. Willebrands, on December 7, 1971, where the Cardinal jotted down the patriarch's words: "il faut aller de l'avant. Comment? Quel pas à faire? Le calice commun. Hâter les étapes. Pas de difficultés au sujet de la primauté, l'infaillibilité, le filioque, etc. [...] Il a dit qu'il voulait créer une commission pan-orthodoxe pour étudier le problème. Personne ne connaît encore cette pensée du patriarche, mais il veut connaître notre réaction".

But the ailing Patriarch would not be able to carry it through, and the deception was tangible both for Cardinal Willebrands, but all the more for the Patriarch of Constantinople. By the end of 1971, for the last time, Willebrands and Duprey traveled to Istanbul to meet Athenagoras. The occasion was a joyful one because the official reason for their visit was to offer the first copies of the *Tomos Agapis* to the Patriarch. Athenagoras, hardly able to conceal his feelings on the slow progress, repeated his mantra:

Nous sommes la même Église. Je crois à la tradition. Je n'ai rien qui me sépare de mon frère. Rien sur quoi je ne suis pas d'accord avec lui. Le filioque, l'infaillibilité, la primauté, est-ce que je les admetts? Mais oui! Bien sûr! Il serait fou de demander à une Église de renoncer à ses trésors, à ses dogmes, pour faire l'union. Au cours de l'entretien, lorsqu'il parlait de la communion au même calice, le patriarche répéta plusieurs fois: "ce jour arrivera parce que nous y croyons"¹⁰⁵.

Athenagoras stuck with his promises, but also added in the same conversation on December 7, the anniversary of the uplifting of the anathema's six years before, that "tout le peuple attendait que nous célébrions, que nous communions ensemble, au même pain rompu ensemble, au même calice. Il a été déçu"¹⁰⁶. The next time Willebrands travelled to Istanbul was as part of the pontifical delegations on the occasion of the death of Athenagoras¹⁰⁷. There, at the Phanar, Willebrands learned that in his testament the Patriarch had written that the Church should return to the type of unity it had before 1054¹⁰⁸.

105. GU: F. Long, *Rapport sur le voyage du Cardinal Willebrands à Istanbul du 6 au 10 décembre 1971*, p. 4.

106. *Ibid.*

107. GU: F. Long, *Rapport sur le séjour à Istanbul de la mission pontificale présidée par le Card. Willebrands et envoyée pour les funérailles du patriarche Athénagoras*, 8-11 juillet 1972. CSVII: F. Willebrands 321-323: Agenda Card. Willebrands, July 7, 1972: "À 8.00h, le P. Schmidt me communique par téléphone la nouvelle de la mort du patriarche Athénagoras. [...]. J'ai fait une visite au Card. Villot et nous avons parlé du patriarche Athénagoras et de la composition de la délégation qui se rendra à Istanbul. Ce sera probablement Mgr. Benelli, le P. Duprey et moi-même".

108. GU: F. Long, *Rapport sur le séjour à Istanbul de la mission pontificale* (n. 107), p. 2. One year later, before the Angelus addressed to crowd on St. Peter's square in Rome, Paul VI, would make public his reminiscence of the dream shared with Athenagoras, saying that: "three times we had the good fortune of meeting him personally, and a hundred times have we exchanged letters, always mutually promising to make every effort to re-establish perfect unity in faith and in the love of Christ among us, and he always synthesized his feelings in one supreme hope: that of being able to drink from the same chalice with us, that is, to celebrate the eucharistic sacrifice together, the synthesis and the crown of our common ecclesial identification with Christ. And this too we have much desired".

V. EPILOGUE

By way of closing considerations, we would add a minor excursus to the reconstruction of the “third moment”. Although our story ended in 1970, the internal discussion within the small committee preparing the reports on an eventual concelebration appears to have been taken further on the more public level. It was clear from the reports that both Willebrands and Bouyer accepted some of the foundational work laid out in Vittorio Peri’s book. Bouyer made his opinion public in his own book in 1970, where he wrote that the matter of the value of the post 11th century council definitions “was set down in a manner that might be judged definitive by Vittorio Peri, in his book *Concili e Chiese*”. In fact, Bouyer argued, insisting on the “hierarchy of councils”, that the:

Latin Middle Ages, which held a position on the unity of the Church corresponding to the one we have merely reverted to in order to draw from it all the consequences, never placed these general councils of the West on the level of the seven ecumenical councils of antiquity. Only since Bellarmine have people come to a different position¹⁰⁹.

In conclusion, we note that both Bouyer and De Vries were present, in 1974, at the Vienna Conference “Pro Oriente” devoted to the theme of *Koinonia*. On that occasion the significance of the lifting of the 1054 anathema’s was studied, as well as the “Canonical Communion” with the East, on the basis of the mutual acceptance of the Ancient Ecumenical Councils. In this context, Bouyer presented his *Réflexions* on the case¹¹⁰. The discussion secretly held within the Secretariat came to the fore again, with one of the theological experts present, Joseph Ratzinger, calling Bouyer’s position a “realistic utopia”¹¹¹. Fr. de Vries still judged

109. L. BOUYER, *The Church of God: Body of Christ and Temple of the Holy Spirit*, San Francisco, CA, Ignatius Press, 1982, pp. 595-596. The author goes on to claim: “we have established that the Church has always admitted that partial councils could definitively express the *mens Ecclesiae*. This must be the case, to a certain point, with all the councils called by the pope and confirmed by him, after having brought together a considerable representation of bishops. It is no less true that their decisions, even when they can be considered infallible and therefore irreformable, by the fact that they were made in the absence of a considerable portion of the episcopate, which would have represented one of the most venerable theological traditions, can call for later complements that would not have been necessitated in the case of an ecumenical council, in the most ancient and truly plenary sense of the word”. The French original, *L’Église de Dieu: Corps du Christ et Temple de l’Esprit-Saint* appeared in 1970.

110. L. BOUYER, *Réflexions sur le rétablissement possible de la communion entre les Églises orthodoxes et catholique: Perspectives actuelles*, in *Istina* 20 (1975) 112-115.

111. Also see Joseph RATZINGER’s approach in his contribution *Schisme anathématique*, in *Istina* (1975) 87-99, where he wrote on p. 99: “Partout où l’agapè est une réalité

the proposal of Bouyer to be unacceptable. In our days, hope for a full communion is still present, especially when one reads, for example, Ratzinger's *Principles of Catholic Theology*, where the previous pope at least partially picked up the ideas so dear to Bouyer, Duprey and Willebrands in the late 1960s and early 1970s¹¹².

Tilburg University
Kamer K 716
PO Box 90153
NL-5000 LE Tilburg
Nederland
k.schelkens@uvt.nl

Karim SCHELKENS

ecclésiale, elle doit se traduire par l'agapè eucharistique. Tous les efforts doivent être orientés en fonction de ce but. Afin que ce but puisse être atteint, il faut exiger, comme conséquence immédiate, que l'on travaille incessamment à l'assainissement de la mémoire'. Le fait juridique de l'oubli doit être suivi du fait historique réel d'une nouvelle mémoire: c'est là une condition *sine qua non* à la fois juridique et théologique, incluse dans les événements du 7 décembre 1965".

112. J. RATZINGER, *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology*, San Francisco, CA, Ignatius, 1987, p. 199: "Rome must not require more from the East with respect to the doctrine of primacy than had been formulated and was lived in the first millennium". Also see the text of a conference held in 1976, published as J. RATZINGER, *Pronostics sur l'avenir de l'œcuménisme. Conférence prononcée à Graz, le 26 janvier 1976*, in *Proche-Orient Chrétien* (1976) 209-219, where the future pope claimed that: "Rome ne doit pas exiger, sur cette doctrine de la primauté, plus que ce qui était formulé et vécu au premier millénaire".

